

PERUSAL SCRIPT

Sherlock Holmes and the Final Problem

Adapted by
Matthew Ivan Bennett
from the story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
RADIO HOUR EPISODE #17



Newport, Maine

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SHERLOCK HOLMES AND FINAL PROBLEM

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3+ actors — OR CAN BE DOUBLED TO 3 ACTORS 2M, 1F)

Watson
Holmes
Moriarty
Hansom Cabman
Brougham Driver
Porter
Old Italian Priest (AKA Holmes)
Maître D'
Mountain Guide
Steiler
Swiss Lad

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SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE FINAL PROBLEM by Matthew Ivan Bennett, adapted from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. 2m 1f. What if Dr. Watson was a woman and Sherlock Holmes wasn't always right? On the run from Moriarty, Holmes is unsure of his deductive powers and Watson is unsure of her friendship with him. This rendition of the last story in "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," casts Watson as a woman and re-envision Holmes as carrying a torch for his best friend, even after her recent marriage. It's partly a story of flight and self-doubt and partly a story about the endurance of friendship and platonic love. Moriarty presents a challenge that Holmes and Watson aren't entirely sure they can meet. "You must stand clear, Mr. Holmes, or be smashed."— Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Final Problem" — **RADIO HOUR Episode 17** RADIO HOUR is a co-production between Salt Lake City's Plan-B Theatre Company and the University of Utah's Public Radio station KUER's Radio West. Perfect for Halloween, Christmas, or any time of the year. **ORDER #3386**

MATTHEW IVAN BENNETT is a Resident Playwright of Plan-B Theatre, where he's premiered several stage plays and radio plays in collaboration with KUER's RadioWest, published with Leicester Bay Theatricals. He was a recent fellow at the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation in Taos, New Mexico (Fall 2024). His work usually focuses on the sociopolitical while centering character and humor. His adaptation of FRANKENSTEIN won the Best Feature Program award from the Utah Broadcasters' Association. His one-person play ERIC(A) won Best Drama at the United Solo Festival in New York. His road trip play, AVERSION OF EVENTS is published with Stage Rights. His anti-bullying play DIFFERENT=AMAZING—for grades 3 to 6—is published with Leicester Bay Theatricals. With the O'Neill, he's been a Finalist (LET DOWN YOUR HAIR, 2016) and Semifinalist (ART & CLASS, 2019). He's won the Best Local Playwright award from PlayUtah and Salt Lake's City Weekly honored with an Arty for writing Plan-B's entire season in 2009. In 2014, he received the Holland New Voices award from

Great Plains Theatre Commons and returned in 2019 to workshop his play ART & CLASS. His short plays have appeared at Pacific Play Company in Seattle, the Source Festival in DC, Monkeyman in Toronto, and Theatre Out in Santa Ana. His comedy A NIGHT WITH THE FAMILY ran at the Omaha Community Playhouse. His short film B+A appeared at Slamdance and his feature-length film THE WHOLE LOT was an Official Selection of the Philadelphia Independent Film Festival, the Kansas City Independent Film Festival, the Mesa Independent Film Festival, the San Francisco Independent Film Festival, the Mumbai Indie-Fest, and the New York International Reel Film Festival in 2022 and 2023. In 2015 and 2016, he was a screenwriting finalist at the Austin Film Festival. In Utah, he's worked as a playwright and/or actor with the Salt Lake Acting Company, Pygmalion, Sackerson (devised pieces: A BRIEF WALTZ IN A LITTLE ROOM and THE WORST THING I'VE EVER DONE), and Wasatch Theatre Company. His rom-com FROM JUNE TO AUGUST was the Official Selection for Meanwhile Park's second season in Salt Lake. Matt served 13 years as Assistant Business Manager for Pioneer Theatre Company, as well as reading for their Play-by-Play series, and was previously a part-time Literary Manager for The Constructivists in Milwaukee. His poetry has been published with Sugar House Review, Western Humanities, Utah Life, and Unearthed. Matt earned his Bachelors in Theatre from Southern Utah University—where he also acted for the Utah Shakespeare Festival's educational tours of THE TAMING OF THE SHREW as Grumio, and A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT DREAM as Puck. Matt is a member of Futurescapes and the Dramatists Guild.

Sherlock Holmes and the Final Problem

PART 1

INTRO

F/X: *Waterfall.*

WATSON: *(to the audience)* I take up my pen today with a heavy heart. For I had intended to stop writing about my friend, to say nothing of the tragedy. The very thought of him now rips me in half. But my hand has been forced by libel in the press, and so it passes to me to record what really happened at Richenbach Falls between Professor Moriarty and Sherlock Holmes...

MUSIC

##

SCENE 1

F/X: *Door (opening).*

HOLMES: Don't scream.

WATSON: Ahh! Holmes! What the devil are you doing here?

HOLMES: Bleeding.

(groans)

WATSON: Oh Lord. Where? Where? Have you been shot?

HOLMES: No, but two of my knuckles are rather disarranged. Look. Do they need stitches?

WATSON: Yes, how could you be in doubt? They're split wide open.

HOLMES: I was on the wing. By which I mean running for my life. *(patting himself)* And it was dark. Might I trouble you for a match? I need tobacco. Now. And have apparently been ridden of fire-making implements! My kingdom for a match.

WATSON: I will not help you in your habit.

HOLMES: I'm in pain.

WATSON: My office has been purged of matches.

HOLMES: Not entirely, I think.

WATSON: You think wrongly.

HOLMES: Watson.

WATSON: Holmes.

HOLMES: Watson. I have been burning both ends, don't make me catalog every clue pointing to white phosphorous matches.

WATSON: *(sighs)* You may find one match, and only one, in my copy of Gray's Anatomy.

HOLMES: What page?

WATSON: Two-twenty-one.

HOLMES: *(snaps)* I knew that.

WATSON: You did not.

HOLMES: You are like a pane of glass.

WATSON: Whereas you are just a pain.

F/X: *Match.*

HOLMES: *(smoking)* I will accept your criticism in my weakened condition. *(gasps)* The shutters! Open. Why are they open? You never leave your shutters open.

WATSON: Yes I do.

HOLMES: *(shrinking back)* Shut them. Quickly.

WATSON: Are you afraid of something?

HOLMES: Yes! I'm "running for my life."

WATSON: At this very moment?

HOLMES: I thought that was clear. Surely you can read the signs: my skin is flushed; my pupils, dilated; my mouth, dry as a bone. *(smacks his lips)* Get the window.

WATSON: *(spooked)* Of course. What am I watching for? Am I watching for anything?

HOLMES: No. They are too cunning to be seen.

F/X: *Shutters.*

WATSON: “They”?

HOLMES: Yes, plural — and they have air-guns.

WATSON: Come again?

HOLMES: Air-guns. (*out of nerves*) Compressed gas instead of powder for propulsion. Cleaner. Quieter. The first model was built by Güter of Nuremberg in 1530—

WATSON: Forgo the history. What I would like you to tell me—

HOLMES: Yes, I shall catch you up, but first... Is Mr. Watson in?

WATSON: Holmes, you know too well my husband is not “Mr. Watson.”

HOLMES: I will not call you by a different name at this point in our relationship. You will always be Watson to me, Watson. He will always be Mr. Watson.

WATSON: My husband has a surname. I have taken it.

HOLMES: Which was very silly of you.

WATSON: I wanted to.

HOLMES: Hmm. Yes. You should come away with me. For a week.

WATSON: What?! Where are you going?

HOLMES: Anywhere.

WATSON: (*chuffs*) It is not in your nature to take aimless holidays.

HOLMES: Well, maybe I’m becoming a real boy. Like Maxwell. Is Max here or not?

WATSON: He is away.

HOLMES: Indeed! I knew you were alone.

WATSON: Temporarily.

HOLMES: And thus free to join me.

WATSON: Join you where?

HOLMES: Let’s go to the Continent.

WATSON: To Europe?

HOLMES: We are *in* Europe, Watson, according to the map. I was thinking we could—

WATSON: Sherlock Holmes, what have you gotten into? Explain yourself, or that pipe of yours goes in the rubbish bin.

HOLMES: (*blowing smoke*) Very well. We each have a different tolerance for the unknown. You have probably never heard of Professor Moriarty. Have you?

WATSON: Never.

HOLMES: Ay, and there's the genius of him. The man pervades London and no one has heard of him, Watson. I could almost believe that I have dreamt this kingpin. That is what puts him on a pinnacle. I tell you, though, if I could beat him, if I could free society of him, I would come to my pinnacle. And be content with nothing but my chemical research.

WATSON: Research conducted with what? Your beaker set or your body?

HOLMES: I cannot rest, Doctor, I cannot sit quiet in my chair, knowing that such a man as Moriarty is walking the streets.

WATSON: What has he done?

HOLMES: What has he not? The Napoleon of crime! For years past I have been conscious of some power behind the malefactor, some deep organizing power that stands forever in the way of law and throws its cape over wrongdoers; in cases of forgery, robbery, murder, I have felt the presence of this force, deduced its action in many crimes; for years I have endeavored to unravel the veil that shrouded it, and at last the time came when I seized my thread and pulled until... (*growls*) I am so close. The last steps have been taken; three days more, I might close the case.

WATSON: "Might"?

HOLMES: Yes: the dénouement is not certain. He dogs me! I was caught unaware in my room this morning. I was expecting Mrs. Hudson with the tea tray.

MUSICAL STING

##

SCENE 2 - FLASHBACK

F/X: *Door slams opens; Clinking (tea tray).*

MORIARTY: (*loudly*) Good morning.

(HOLMES startles)

No, I am not your landlady, but not to worry, she is safe — insofar as anyone can be from me. You have less frontal development than I expected. Mmm.

F/X: *Pouring.*

How do you take your tea, Mr. Holmes?

HOLMES: I don't take it, not when demons are serving it.

MORIARTY: Please. Would I stoop to such methods as poison? *(sipping)* Be a good chap, now, and lay the gun on the table. Dangerous habit to finger a loaded firearm in the pocket of your dressing gown. It could go off. Lay it down.

HOLMES: I think not.

MORIARTY: *(chuckles)* Evidently you don't know me, to make so cavalier a threat.

HOLMES: On the contrary, it is fairly evident I do.

(biography)

Professor James Moriarty. At the age of twenty-one, you wrote a treatise on the Binomial Theorem, still cited in papers today. You won the Mathematical Chair at one of our better universities and had, to all appearance, a famous career before you in maths and philosophy. And yet, rumors gathered. You resigned. Came to London. Set up shop as an "army coach." Pray take a seat. I can spare you five minutes if you have anything to say.

MORIARTY: All I have to say has crossed your mind.

HOLMES: Then possibly my answer has crossed yours.

MORIARTY: You intend to interfere with my business? Still? You stand fast?

HOLMES: Absolutely.

MORIARTY: Mmm. Disappointing. Do you mind if I set this tray down?

(he does so carelessly)

F/X: *Clattering (tea tray); Cocking gun.*

(chuckles) So jumpy. So quick to violence. My disappointment is compounding by the second. I had pegged you as self-controlled. Now watch closely. I am reaching, yes, into my pocket, for my memorandum book, slowly, no need to frighten your landlady with a bang, thank you, it is only paper and glue, see?

F/X: *Flipping pages.*

Nn. Here we are. You crossed my path in Chelsea on the fourth of January. On the twenty-third, you incommoded me in Covent Garden; by the middle of February — my, my — I was seriously inconvenienced, a thousand pounds; by the end of March, “hampered in my plans,” “S.H. again,” underlined; and look here, the close of April, no blossoms on the plum trees, I find myself in a position through dogged persecution that I — the lord of my domain — am in danger of losing my pension. The situation, Mr. Holmes, is becoming... untenable.

HOLMES: Not bad, if one considers my undeveloped frontal lobe.

MORIARTY: A low-rated chess player can surprise a grand master.

HOLMES: Too right. Even dab hands like you can lose tempo in one game.

MORIARTY: Tempo? Is that what you have? Your scheme depends on time?

HOLMES: If you think my “scheme” will not succeed, I’m open to constructive criticism.

MORIARTY: You must drop it. You really must.

HOLMES: After Monday.

MORIARTY: Tut, tut. I am sure a man of your intelligence will see there can be only one outcome. Your withdrawal is necessary. You have plied your trade in such a fashion we have but one course left. It has been a treat to see how you’ve grappled with this affair, and I say, unaffectedly, it would be grievous were I forced into extremis. You smile, sir, but I assure you. We could be brothers.

HOLMES: Whatever similarity clogs our blood, it is dwarfed by the many differences.

MORIARTY: I am giving you a safe way out.

HOLMES: No thank you. Danger is part of my trade, and I am prepared to meet it—

MORIARTY: This is not danger; it is inevitable destruction. You stand in the way not merely of an individual, but a mighty organization. You must stand clear, Mr. Holmes, or be smashed.

HOLMES: I fear that in the pleasure of this conversation I am neglecting other business. Do you mind showing yourself out, Professor?

MORIARTY: It seems a pity, but I have done what I could. I know every move of your gambit. You can do nothing before Monday. It has been a duel between you and me, Mr. Holmes. You hope to cage me. But I tell you I will never be caged. You hope to kill me, short of locking me up, but your moment will not come. If you are blessed enough by fortune to visit havoc upon me, rest assured I shall repay the blessing.

HOLMES: Could I be sure of your chains, Moriarty, in the public interest I would welcome my curtain call.

MORIARTY: (*snarling*) I can promise curtains, but not chains.

MUSICAL STING

##

SCENE 3

WATSON: (*snaps her fingers*) Holmes. Why did you not shoot him in the leg? He was in your study.

HOLMES: I... I felt paralyzed. He... His way of speaking leaves a conviction of sincerity a bully could not produce.

WATSON: And you've already been assaulted?

HOLMES: I was nearly trampled by a two-horse van. A brick shattered at my feet from ten stories up. En route to you, a man with a billy club. I knocked him down and cut my knuckles on his teeth. I dare not leave your house by the front door.

WATSON: Will you spend the night here? You could stay here in my consulting room.

HOLMES: Ah. Well. Hmm. No. You might find me a dangerous guest. And I have plans laid. Matters have gone so far they can move without my help in terms of the arrest — although my survival will be vital for convicting him in court. And so, again, it would please me if you would come to the Continent.

(*WATSON hems*)

Your practice is quiet.

WATSON: How do you conjure that?

HOLMES: The indentation on your right middle finger is less pronounced than usual. You have been taking fewer notes on your patients.

WATSON: True.

HOLMES: You also have an accommodating neighbor.

WATSON: False: she is not friendly at all.

HOLMES: She gave you a plate of roast chicken.

WATSON: Have you been in my kitchen?

HOLMES: She'll watch over the place.

WATSON: How do you know about the chicken?

HOLMES: She likes to watch, I saw her at the window. I bet you ten shillings the woman would water your plants. Though she might read your correspondence.

WATSON: Explicate the chicken.

HOLMES: You have a grease stain on your blouse. Clearly from a Sussex hen. (*she balks*) Also, it's on your breath.

WATSON: (*sniffs her breath*) How can you smell anything with that pipe in your face?

HOLMES: Raw talent. Can we start tomorrow?

WATSON: Tomorrow?! As in the day after this one?

HOLMES: Yes, and the one before the next.

WATSON: What do you want me to say to that? “Ohh, I should be glad to go somewhere in Europe”? Honestly. Did you come here expecting me to swim blithely into the tide of adventure?

HOLMES: I will accept you with or without blitheness. Though I prefer you blithe. Shall we say nine o'clock?

WATSON: (*steams*) If necessary.

HOLMES: I see it as necessary.

WATSON: Then, yes. I will come. After I stitch up your hand.

HOLMES: Brilliant. Stitch away. But take this, before I forget.

F/X: *Paper (an envelope).*

WATSON: What's this?

HOLMES: I took the liberty of scribbling some instructions for you, and I beg you, Joanna, obey them to the letter. For we are now playing a game against the worst rogue I have ever met.

MUSIC

STATION BREAK

##

PART 2

SCENE 4

MUSIC

WATSON: *(to the audience)* The next morning, I read my scribbled instructions with a flutter of nerves. I sent for a hansom cab, telling my butler to take neither the first nor second cab presenting itself. I leapt into the seat and gave the address to the cabman on a slip of paper.

(whispering to the cabman)

Do *not* throw that away.

HANSON CABMAN: Whatever you say, poppet.

F/X: *Carriage.*

WATSON: *(to the audience)* My back sweating, I held the coins ready, and paid the fare no sooner than we stopped at the Lowther Arcade. I dashed through the market — as best I could with my cane — timing everything to reach the other side at quarter-past nine. As Holmes promised, a brougham was waiting by the curb with a very massive driver — “black cloak, red collar.”

BROUGHAM DRIVER: Looking for me, missy?

WATSON: I am not a missy, I am a doctor.

BROUGHAM DRIVER: My mistake. Any baggage?

WATSON: Only what you see.

BROUGHAM DRIVER: Cheers to me then, I can accommodate everything I see. Never had a woman doctor. Let me help you inside.

WATSON: I’m not an invalid.

BROUGHAM DRIVER: What’s the cane for?

WATSON: The last man to ask me that did not like my answer. I can climb a step. Drive.

F/X: *Whip; Heavy carriage.*

(to the audience) I swung into my second carriage, tempering myself, and felt glad for the roof and walls. Without any directions from me, the man rattled us to Victoria Station and sped off with a wink.

So far the plan had gone well. My luggage waited for me, dispatched the night before, and I had no difficulty in finding the train car that Holmes had indicated, the only one marked “Engaged.”

F/X: *Crowd.*

(to the audience) My only source of anxiety was the non-appearance of Holmes.

(to herself)

Where are you, dear boy?

(to the audience)

The station clock read seven minutes from the time of departure. In vain, I searched among the clumps of travelers. There was no sign of him.

(to herself)

Come on, Holmes. Don’t leave me at the station.

(to the audience)

I paced the depot, and in my vexation argued with a porter who was flat out refusing to help an old Italian priest.

OLD ITALIAN PRIEST: *Il mio bagaglio deve andare a Parigi.*

PORTER: I can’t understand a word you’re saying, you wrinkled git!

WATSON: He said his luggage ought to go through to Paris.

OLD ITALIAN PRIEST: *Grazie.*

PORTER: Who are you, his lady love?

WATSON: No, I am not his mistress, but I am appalled by your treatment—

PORTER: Take your seat, then! I can manage my own affairs.

WATSON: Plainly, you cannot, as I had to translate for you!

OLD ITALIAN PRIEST: *Esattamente. Ho visto patate più intelligenti di quest'uomo.*

PORTER: What’s he saying now?

WATSON: I’d rather not relate it.

PORTER: Then hobble off, you bint.

WATSON: I beg your pardon?

PORTER: What happened to you anyway, your daddy beat you for your back talk?

OLD ITALIAN PRIEST: *Che tu possa bruciare all'inferno, cane inglese!*

WATSON: *(overlapping)* It's alright. It's alright. I can handle him.

(to the Porter)

You will book the Padre's bags for the city in France spelled P-A-R-I-S, or I will find your supervisor and have you sacked on account of prejudice.

PORTER: Who's prejudiced?!

WATSON: You are — against Italians, against my sex, against my condition. I carry the cane because of war. It was the Afghan war that happened, not my “daddy.” Unlike yourself, he was a decent man.

(to the Old Italian Priest)

Buon viaggio, Padre.

OLD ITALIAN PRIEST: *Buon viaggio.*

WATSON: *(to the audience)* My teeth on edge, I had a last look round...

F/X: *Train whistle.*

(to the audience) And then slumped again to the car. An icicle grew in my stomach. Moriarty must've made his move. Holmes wasn't here. The doors had been shut, the whistle blown. I entered the car—

F/X: *Door (sliding open).*

HOLMES: *(Italian accent)* My deara Watson—

WATSON: Ahh! Holmes. Was that *you* arguing with the porter?

HOLMES: *(still playing with the accent)* A simple disguise. A hat. A robe. A few wrinkles.

(his voice)

Every precaution is still necessary. I have reason to think they're hot on our trail. Ah! Moriarty himself.

F/X: *Train chugging (building, then throughout).*

WATSON: *(to the audience)* The engine began to chuff, and glancing back, I saw the rascalion through wavy glass — tall, thin — pushing through the crowd.

MUSIC

MORIARTY: *(off)* Stop the train! Stop this train! Police!

WATSON: *(to the audience)* His forehead was domed in a white curve, his eyes sunk deeply into his head. His face was a hatchet, and in a long split second it oscillated to find me. He peered at me with cold metallic curiosity. Moriarty was no dream in the mind of Sherlock Holmes. He was only too real. I willed the train to gather speed. We shot clear of the station.

F/X: *Train (ambient).*

HOLMES: Well! With all our precautions, we cut it rather fine, didn't we?

(chuckling nervously)

I almost broke character and used bartitsu on that porter.

WATSON: If I'd had my bag, I may have performed a circumcision on him. *(calming)*

HOLMES: That would have been a fine mess. Have you seen the morning paper?

WATSON: You could've told me how to recognize you on the platform! I was worried sick.

HOLMES: Had I told you, they might have pried it out of you. Did you see the article?

WATSON: What article?

HOLMES: In the paper. They set fire to 221-B.

WATSON: Oh my Lord. Were you there? Mrs. Hudson?

HOLMES: We extracted ourselves. No harm done. The arson could have only been spite. Otherwise, Mrs. Hudson and I would be charcoal. They did, however, indubitably take the precaution of watching you, regardless of whether they saw me at your place: that is what brought Moriarty to the depot. You made no slip in coming?

WATSON: I did as you asked.

HOLMES: You found the driver in black and red?

WATSON: Yes, he was waiting.

HOLMES: Did you recognize him?

WATSON: Should I have?

HOLMES: My brother Mycroft.

WATSON: I would have known if Mycroft—

HOLMES: My brother's gifted with disguises.

WATSON: He called me a "woman doctor."

HOLMES: Less gifted with the fairer sex.

WATSON: Remind me to slap him later.

HOLMES: With relish.

(rubs hands)

But we must plan what to do about Moriarty.

WATSON: Do? We're on the express, and the boat runs in connection with it. I should think we have shaken him off.

HOLMES: Watson, you did not realize my meaning when I said this man walks the same intellectual plane as me. If I were the pursuer, would I allow myself to be baffled?

WATSON: What will he do?

HOLMES: What I should do.

WATSON: What would you do?

HOLMES: Engage a special train.

WATSON: But it must be later than ours.

HOLMES: By no means. The "express" will stop at Canterbury; and there is always a quarter hour's delay at the boat. He will catch us.

WATSON: Have him arrested. At the harbor.

HOLMES: And wreck the work of three months? The authorities would get the big fish, but the smaller would dart left and right. On Monday, we should have them all. No, an arrest is not acceptable yet.

WATSON: Then we shall get out at Canterbury.

HOLMES: Oo. Watson. I can feel you kicking in the tide of adventure. I agree. Out at Canterbury. And then?

WATSON: Overland to Newhaven.

HOLMES: And then?

WATSON: To Dieppe, in France.

HOLMES: While Moriarty does what?

WATSON: I don't know.

HOLMES: What would I do?

WATSON: (*huffs*) If Moriarty was, in fact, watching me, he knows my luggage was marked for Paris. He will get on to Paris and wait.

HOLMES: Very good. You got there slowly, but you got there. I have missed you, you know.

WATSON: Pish. You miss me lighting your pipe when your matches go missing.

(HOLMES laughs)

It's the truth! If not for Mrs. Hudson and me, 221-B would've burnt far sooner.

HOLMES: No, the truth is—! The truth is... I should try to nap. I got hardly a wink last night.

(looking out the window)

Oh, my my, here comes the Thames. Do you want the window?

WATSON: What were you going to say?

HOLMES: Hmm? Oh nothing. My wit failed me.

WATSON: I don't believe you. The truth is what?

HOLMES: Boring. The truth is boring, Watson. What I was going to say was... I never lost a matchstick in my life.

WATSON: Oh.

HOLMES: I thought you knew that.

WATSON: I didn't. I was not aware.

HOLMES: Really. Hmm. Hmmm.

WATSON: (*changing the subject*) Would you like anything from the refreshment cart?

HOLMES: No, but thank you for offering. My guts have been mixed up this morning.

WATSON: I have bicarbonate in my handbag.

HOLMES: Pah, it requires no intervention.

WATSON: As you wish. Time will do the trick.

HOLMES: The best drug of all, time. Barring some alternatives.

WATSON: Quite. Well. Excuse me. *(leaving)*

F/X: *Sliding door (opening).*

I just realized. You don't speak Italian. When did you learn Italian?

HOLMES: I... suppose it was about the time... you and Max had your Venetian honeymoon.

WATSON: I see. Excuse me.

F/X: *Sliding door (closing).*

HOLMES: *(to himself)* "I see. Excuse me." "I didn't. I was not aware." She knew. She knows. She always knew. *(yawning)*

MORIARTY: *(echoing in Holmes' mind)* You have less frontal development than I expected.

HOLMES: *(shaking himself)* Good God. I need a tranquilizer.

MORIARTY: *(echoing in Holmes' mind)* How do you take your tea?

HOLMES: *(slaps his face)* Two more days, man. Two more days.

MORIARTY: *(echoing in Holmes' mind)* It seems a pity, but I have done what I could.

HOLMES: Stop it!

##

SCENE 5

F/X: *Crows (throughout).*

WATSON: *(to the audience)* At Canterbury, we found a wait of sixty minutes before the train to Newhaven. I was still watching the luggage-van disappear with my wardrobe when Holmes pulled my sleeve and pointed back up the line. Close by, in the Kentish woods, a plume of white smoke. A train with only one car.

HOLMES: The Professor.

WATSON: Are you sure?

HOLMES: Positive.

WATSON: I wish you were less right sometimes.

HOLMES: Save your wish, Doctor. We should hide. That luggage. There.

F/X: *Train (fast).*

WATSON: *(to the audience)* The engine flew along the curve. We barely had time to conceal ourselves when it passed with a bang and roar, a whiffing of hot air in our faces.

HOLMES: There he goes, the overgrown bat.

WATSON: Bloody hell. The train will come apart.

HOLMES: I think not — but there is a bright side for us: we have seen the limits of that imp's intelligence. It would have been a *coup de maître* had he deduced what I would have and acted accordingly, but he did not.

WATSON: And what would he have done if he'd overtaken us *before* Canterbury?

HOLMES: *(it's obvious)* Murder. Attempted murder. Assault. He would have hopped trains and put a leaden slug in my person. It is, however, a sport at which two may play.

WATSON: You mean three.

HOLMES: Three.

WATSON: I didn't come for the fresh air. And if this lowlife even lifts his right arm? I have my revolver.
(pats her handbag)

I'll use it.

HOLMES: I know you would. But the lowlife is left-handed.

WATSON: Whichever arm he lifts.

HOLMES: The question now is: do we take a premature lunch or take the chance of starving before Newhaven.

WATSON: No one is starving, I have biscuits.

HOLMES: Chocolate? Do you have chocolate?

WATSON: Raisin.

HOLMES: Why have you become a missionary for raisins? Other foods have been discovered, you know, since the dried grape.

WATSON: Fiber is not dispensable in one's diet.

HOLMES: My work requires concentrated sugar. I eat for the brain, not the intestines. I'm going to starve.

MUSIC (VIOLIN)

##

16 MORE PAGES UNTIL THE END